

SULLIVAN COUNTY DELEGATION

AUGUST 25, 2005

SUGAR RIVER TECHNICAL CENTER, CLAREMONT

REPORT OF REP. JOHN CLOUTIER

Delegation Members Present: Reps. Harry Gale, Beverly Rodeschin, Peter Franklin, Tom Donovan, Larry Converse, and John Cloutier
Elected County Officials Present: Commissioner Ethel Jarvis

Meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Delegation Chair, Rep. Cloutier.

The chair made some brief introductory remarks explaining that the main reason for the meeting was to discuss the possible secession of Sunapee from Sullivan County as well as other possible changes in county government and/or county tax structure that Sunapee might want in lieu of secession. Changes that can only be proposed by state representatives and senators in legislation that can be filed for the 2006 legislative session between the period of Sept. 12-23, 2005. The chair added that he hoped the residents of Sunapee and other Sullivan County communities present would be able to engage in a "dialogue" over Sunapee's reasons for supporting secession and other previously-mentioned changes.

Sunapee Rep. Gale then reviewed a detailed written paper available to the audience on the reasons for his town's dissatisfaction with the county's current form of government, and possible changes, short of secession, that could be implemented to alleviate this dissatisfaction. (See attached document)

Rep. Converse entered meeting at 7:14 p.m.

Rep. Gale also discussed Aug. 23 meeting in Meredith, that he and Rep. Franklin had attended which included complaints against New Hampshire's current tax structure by communities similar to Sunapee.

Claremont Mayor Scott Pope spoke of Claremont as a "hub city" where workers from other communities in the county travel to just to work there. Said he hoped Sunapee wouldn't secede from the county, but believed the root of the town's problems had to do with New Hampshire's current tax structure. Mentioned seasonal workers who commuted from other Sullivan County communities, including Claremont, to work at various Sunapee resorts during certain times of the year.

Rep. Donovan said he would personally support Sunapee seceding from the county under certain conditions. These conditions include the town taking its fair share of garbage and the number of county residents needing social services with them. He also blamed New Hampshire's current tax structure for the town's complaints.

Sunapee's Morton Brady expressed his disappointment that all but one of his town's three selectmen had "boycotted" tonight's and the two previous meetings on secession held on Aug. 11 in Sunapee and Aug. 18 in Newport. He added that one selectman had only attended the Sunapee meeting. *Said implementation of a state income tax might help solve some of the town's complaints*

Plainfield's Steve Taylor, a former selectman and now town moderator, suggested that the county rejoin Cheshire County from which it split during the 1820's. Said this merger would make more sense than Sunapee seceding from the county. Again blamed the state's current tax structure for the town's problems. Added that sharply escalating property values in the town, and that lack of some communities failing to reevaluate their properties on a regular schedule is also to blame. Finally, he declared that he would rally every Sullivan County community to fight Sunapee's secession "tooth and nail."

County Commissioner Jarvis of Unity said Sunapee's secession would cause financial hardship for the rest of the county. Mrs. Jarvis said she was proud of the town, but would be "devastated" if it left the county.

Rep. Franklin asked Rep. Gale for more detailed documentation of Sunapee's claim that it only receives two percent of the total county services provided. Also asked that such documentation be given to all delegation members.

The chair then made concluding remarks on his opinion on the cause of Sunapee's complaints against the county. Added that he was disappointed that more Sunapee residents, especially town officials, hadn't attended tonight's meeting in an effort to discuss Sunapee's problems, and possible solutions, including secession with other county residents.

Rep. Rodeschin moved, Rep. Donovan seconded a motion to adjourn at 8:26 p.m.

John R. Cloutier
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Acting Clerk